

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 8, 2003. Claims 1 to 5, 7 to 15 and 17 to 23 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 10 and 17 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned representative wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies and thoughtful treatment afforded during the January 8, 2004 telephonic interview with the Examiner and with Supervisory Examiner Smith. The amendments and remarks made herein are based on the proposed amendment discussed during the interview, and accurately summarize the content of the interview.

As to a formal matter, the Examiner indicated during the interview that he would consider the art cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated February 17, 2000 and acknowledge his consideration in the Interview Summary.

Claims 1, 4, 7 to 10, 13 to 15 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,870,717 (Wiecha) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,694,551 (Doyle). Claims 2, 3, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Wiecha and Doyle in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,500,513 (Langhans). Claims 2 to 5, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Wiecha and Doyle in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,970,475 (Barnes). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to approving purchase requests of desired articles which are stored in a database in advance. A list window is displayed, through

which an approver is able to view a list of articles that have been requested for approval, as well as a selection approval button and a selection rejection button.

In the instance that the approver wants to reject purchase of a certain article, the approver can select that article and then select the selection rejection button. This causes a rejection processing window to appear. The rejection processing window contains a rejection button, a rejection cancel button, and the selected article. By selecting the rejecting cancel button, the rejection processing of the selected article is cancelled. By selecting the rejection button, however, the selected article is stored in a database as a rejected article. In this way, the rejection processing window allows the approver to confirm that the selected article is one that is to be rejected.

In the instance that the approver wants to approve purchase of a certain article, the approver can select that article and then select the selection approval button. This causes an approval processing window to appear. The approval processing window contains an approval button, an approval cancel button, and the selected article. By selecting the approval cancel button, the approval processing of the selected article is cancelled. By selecting the approval button, however, the selected article is stored in a database as an approved article and the selected article is deleted from the list of articles in the list window. In this way, the approval processing window allows the approver to confirm that selected article is one that is to be approved. Also, since the selected article is deleted from the list window once it is approved in the approving processing window, the approver is able to quickly identify which articles have yet to be approved.

By utilizing a list of articles requested for approval along with separate approval and rejection processing windows, the present invention allows an approver to confirm that articles selected for approval or rejection are correct. Furthermore, since articles are deleted from the list window in response to the selection of the approval button in the approval processing window, an approver can quickly determine what articles have yet to be approved. The approved/rejected status of each article is stored in the database.

In a representative embodiment of the invention, a list window is shown in Figure 24 and contains a list of articles together with a select approval button and a select rejection button. Upon selecting articles in the list and then selecting the select approval button, the approval processing window of Figure 25 is displayed. Likewise, upon selecting articles in the list and then selecting the select rejection button, the rejection processing window of Figure 26 is displayed.

With specific reference to the claims, independent Claim 1 recites a purchase request approving apparatus capable of approving a purchase request of a desired article stored in a database in advance. The purchase request apparatus comprises display means for displaying a list window, wherein the list window contains a list of articles for which approval is requested, a selection approval button to display an approval processing window, and a selection reject button to display a rejection processing window. The apparatus further comprises selecting means for selecting an article, in accordance with a user operation, from the articles displayed in the list window. The apparatus also comprises display control means for executing appearance of an approval processing window in response to selection of the selection approval button, and for executing

appearance of a rejection processing window in response to selection of the selection reject button. The approval processing window has an approval button to perform approval of the selected article, an approval cancel button to cancel approval processing of the selected article, and the selected article. The rejection processing window has a reject button to perform rejection of the selected article, a reject cancel button to cancel rejection processing of the selected article, and the selected article. The apparatus further comprises purchase approving means for storing the selected article as an approved article in the database, and deleting the selected article from the list in the list window in response to selecting the approval button in the approval processing window; and purchase rejection means for storing the selected article as a rejected article in the database in response to selecting the reject button in the rejection processing window.

Independent Claims 10 and 17 are method and computer-readable storage medium claims, respectively, that correspond generally to independent Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or suggest the features of independent Claims 1, 10 and 17 and in particular, is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the following features: (a) a list window containing a list of articles for which approval is requested, a selection approval button to display an approval processing window, and a selection reject button to display a rejection processing window, or (b) an approval processing window which appears in response to selection of the selection approval button, or (c) a rejection processing window which appears in response to selection of the selection reject button, or (d) storage of the selected article as an approved article in the database and

deletion of the selected article from the list in the list window in response to selecting the approval button in the approval processing window.

Wiecha relates to a system for ordering items over a computer network using an electronic catalog. Wiecha teaches that employees can select items for purchase from an electronic catalog (column 3, lines 10-15). The employee accumulates selected items in a clip-board, and can then submit the selected items to the appropriate approvers (column 3, lines 30-37). Wiecha also teaches that once an approved order is submitted to a vendor, it is deleted from the database.

The Office Action takes the position that Wiecha discloses use of an internet browser on the client terminal as well as separate and distinct processes for approvals and rejections. The Office Action contends that this disclosure reads on the present invention's claim of a list window and separate approval and rejection processing windows, or at least that such features would have been a design choice in view of the actual disclosure of Wiecha.

However, while Wiecha may contemplate the use of browsers and separate approval and rejection processes, Wiecha does not disclose how the browser interface appears or how the browser interface would interact with separate approval and rejection processes. Weicha makes no mention of a list window that contains a list of articles selected for approval, a select approval button, or a select rejection button. Furthermore, Weicha does not teach that the select approval and select rejection buttons of a list window can be used to initiate the separate approval and rejection processes.

Additionally, Wiecha is not seen to teach that the selected article is deleted from the list window when that item has been approved in the approval processing window. The Office Action argues that Wiecha discloses that a line item can be deleted once an order has been placed with a vendor (column 10, lines 1-3). However, this teaching in Wiecha relates to the deletion of line items from the database once the order has been placed with a vendor. The deletion of the selected article from the list window, as claimed by the present invention, occurs in a different place and serves a different purpose.

The present invention claims that the selected article is deleted from the list window when that article is approved in the approval processing window. In addition, that article is stored in a database as an approved article. Thus, an approved article is not deleted from the database, as done by Wiecha, but rather is stored there even though its appearance is deleted from the list window. In this way, the list window serves as a tool that allows an approver to quickly confirm what is left to be approved in a purchase request. The line item deletion as disclosed by Wiecha only takes place once the order is placed with a vendor. Wiecha makes no mention of deletion of articles from a browser list window, muchless that such a deletion is affected by a separate approval processing window.

As such, Wiecha is not seen to disclose or suggest the following: (a) a list window containing a list of articles for which approval is requested, a selection approval button to display an approval processing window, and a selection reject button to display a rejection processing window, or (b) an approval processing window which appears in response to selection of the selection approval button, or (c) a rejection processing window

which appears in response to selection of the selection reject button, or (d) storage of the selected article as an approved article in the database and deletion of the selected article from the list in the list window in response to selecting the approval button in the approval processing window.

The remaining art applied against the claims, namely Doyle, Lanhans, and Barnes, is not seen to supply what is missing from Wiecha. Accordingly, based on the foregoing, independent Claims 1, 10 and 17 are believed to be allowable.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
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Respectfully submitted,


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